

**ANNUAL OPERATING INSTRUCTIONS
SAN DIEGO ALLOTMENT (00312)
SANTA FE NATIONAL FOREST
JEMEZ RANGER DISTRICT
2003/2004**

I. AUTHORIZATION

For the 2003/2004 grazing season, applications for the following were approved:

145	Adult Cattle	05/01/2003 – 11/30/2003
8	Bulls	05/01/2003 – 11/30/2003
116	Adult Cattle	12/01/2003 – 04/30/2004
8	Bulls	12/01/2003 – 04/30/2004

Non-use for resource protection (drought) is being granted as follows:

107	Adult Cattle	05/01/2003 – 11/30/2003
4	Bulls	05/01/2003 – 11/30/2003
4	Bulls	12/01/2003 – 04/30/2004

2002/2003 Grazing Season Actual Use:

210	Adult Cattle	05/01/2002 – 07/14/2002	
12	Bulls	05/01/2002 – 07/14/2002	
90	Adult Cattle	07/15/2002 – 11/30/2002	Reduction due to drought
4	Bulls	07/15/2002 – 11/30/2002	Reduction due to drought
116	Adult Cattle	12/01/2002 – 04/30/2003	
4	Bulls	12/01/2002 – 04/30/2003	

The authorized livestock numbers and grazing periods are no guarantee that they will stay on a pasture for the full grazing period or the allotment for the full season. Below average forage production may require that cattle will be removed from the allotment earlier than expected. This decision will be made in cooperation with you and based on the utilization for key species and key areas as outlined in these Annual Operating Instructions.

The rotation plan (Table 1) is subject to change due to unforeseen circumstances such as lack of water and forage in the pastures. The Forest Service or the permittee can initiate changes of pasture moves outside of the rotation plan below in coordination with this office. The permittee or this office must submit a written justification before change is made. Moves may be made up to 5 days before the scheduled move date and should be completed within 5 days of the move date, unless prior approval is given to adjust the use periods.

Table 1. Authorized grazing rotation.		
Numbers of Cattle	Pasture	Grazing Period
145 c/c & 8 bulls	Cebolla/Lake Fork Canyon*	5/1-5/21
145 c/c & 8 bulls	Cebollita	5/22-6/11
145 c/c & 8 bulls	Schoolhouse	6/12-8/9
145 c/c & 8 bulls	Porter	8/10-9/10
145 c/c & 8 bulls	Holiday	9/11-10/15
145 c/c & 8 bulls	Cebolla/Lake Fork	10/16-11/15
	Upper Virgin**	REST
	Lake Fork Mesa	REST
*74 Adult	Guadalupe	11/16-11/30
74 Adult	Joaquin	12/1-12/29
74 Adult	Pajarito	12/30-4/30
42 Adult	Palomares	11/18-4/30
8 bulls	Lobo	11/18-4/30
None	Fenton, Virgin Canyon, Lower Virgin	Rest

*Riparian Pastures--These areas are primarily utilized to gather and transition cattle to and from summer/winter pastures. The numbers indicated are the maximum amount allowed. Rarely do these areas actually experience the maximum amount of cattle numbers for the full grazing period. Instead cattle begin to "trickle" into and out of these areas as individual association members trail or truck cattle that are ready to be moved. Cattle with young calves or that have otherwise not been processed by the "on date" are typically held back until they are ready to be moved.

**In the event that all pastures have been utilized before the end of the summer grazing season, Upper Virgin pasture can be considered for use if resource conditions are sufficient to allow the use of this pasture.

II. MONITORING

The proper utilization of forage is a critical factor in livestock management on the San Diego Allotment. We will be checking levels of use to insure that forage utilization is within recommended levels during the grazing season. Key areas and key species (Table 2) will be monitored within the allotment.

Table 2. Key areas and key species for the San Diego Allotment		
Site #	Pasture/Key Area Location	Key Grass Species
1	Cebolla /Meadow	Kentucky Bluegrass
2	Lake Fork/ Lower	Kentucky Bluegrass
3	Lake Fork Mesa/ Geotherm	Mountain Muhly, Arizona Fescue
4	Cebollita/ Horse Corral	Mountain Muhly, Arizona Fescue
5	Schoolhouse/ Schoolhouse Canyon	Mountain Muhly, Arizona Fescue
6	Porter/ Cebollita Spring	Mountain Muhly, Arizona Fescue
7	Holiday/ North Mesa	Mountain Muhly, Arizona Fescue
8	Upper Virgin/ Virgin	Mountain Muhly, Arizona Fescue
9	Joaquin	Mountain Muhly, Arizona Fescue
10	Pajarito	Blue Grama, Western Wheatgrass

Continued on next page.

11	Palomares	Blue Grama, Western Wheatgrass
12	Guadalupe	Mountain Muhly, Arizona Fescue

Both the Forest Service and the permittee are responsible for monitoring forage use and stubble height on the allotment to ensure that proper use levels are not exceeded. We are primarily concerned with use levels in canyon bottoms where cattle tend to concentrate use on palatable feed. We have identified key areas to be monitored on this allotment. Maximum allowable use is set for a conservative grazing intensity of less than 40% for the San Diego Allotment. Please refer to the Table 3 below for descriptors to aid in determining forage use levels.

Forage use levels should be monitored periodically by the permittee to aid in determining when livestock should be moved between pastures. **Permittee inspection summary sheets (attached) are provided for your convenience in order to record any of your observations throughout the season. You are highly encouraged to record your allotment visits to aid in documenting allotment conditions.** Forest Service personnel will attempt to visit at least one key area within each grazed pasture during the second half of the scheduled grazing period. If areas within a pasture or the pasture as a whole begin to approach the identified stubble heights (Tables 4 and 5), actions will need to be taken to limit additional forage use. If use within that key area is approaching allowable stubble heights (in red) then the remaining key areas will also be monitored and the pasture inspected to determine overall use patterns. This information will be used to determine if cattle are to be re-distributed within the pasture or removed from the pasture.

Table 3. Qualitative characteristics of grazing intensity categories used to characterize New Mexico rangelands (Holechek & Galt, 6/00, Rangelands).		
Qualitative Grazing Intensity Category	Use of Forage by Weight	Qualitative Indicators of Grazing Intensity
Light to non-use	0-30	Only choice plants (key species) and areas show use. There is no use of poor forage plants
Conservative	31-40	Choice forage plants (key species) have abundant seed stalks; Areas more than a mile from water show little use: About one third to one half primary forage plants show grazing on key areas.
Moderate	41-50	Most of accessible range show use; Key areas show patchy appearance with one half to two thirds of primary forage plants (key species) showing use; Grazing is noticeable 1-1½ miles from water
Heavy	51-60	Nearly all primary forage plants show grazing on key areas: Palatable shrubs show hedging: Key areas show a lack of seed stalks: Grazing is noticeable in areas over 1½ miles from water
Severe	61+	Key areas show a clipped or mowed appearance (no stubble ht.): Shrubs are severely hedged; There is evidence of livestock trailing to forage; Areas over 1½ miles from water lack stubble height.

Table 4. Grazing intensity guide for shortgrass-pinyon/juniper rangeland in New Mexico (Holechek & Galt, 6/00, Rangelands).				
Qualitative Grazing Intensity Category	Use of Forage by Weight	Stubble Height Indicators of Grazing Intensity		
		Blue Grama	Western Wheatgrass	Crested Wheatgrass
	(%)	----- Inches-----		
Light to non-use	0-30	2.5+	7.0+	5.5+
Conservative	31-40	2.0-2.5	4.0-5.0	4.0-5.0
Moderate	41-50	1.5-2.0	3.0-4.0	3.0-4.0
Heavy	51-60	1.0-1.5	2.0-3.0	2.0-3.0
Severe	61+	<1.0	<2.0	<2.0

Table 5. Grazing intensity guide for mountain grassland rangeland in New Mexico (Holechek & Galt, 6/00, Rangelands).						
Qualitative Grazing Intensity Category	Use of Forage by Weight	Stubble Height Indicators of Grazing Intensity				
		Arizona Fescue	Western Wheatgrass	Bluegrass	Mountain Muhly	Timber Oatgrass*
	---(%)---	-----Inches-----				
Light to none-use	0-30	8+	7+	5+	5+	8+
Conservative	31-40	6-7	4-5	4-5	4-5	6-7
Moderate	41-50	5-6	3-4	3-4	3-4	5-6
Heavy	51-60	4-5	2-3	2-3	2-3	4-5
Severe	61+	<4	<2	<2	<2	<4
*Determined by personal observation.						

The Forest Service may or may not conduct inspections on the grazing allotment during the ongoing grazing period as time and personnel availability allows. Monitoring items such as distribution patterns, range readiness, cattle numbers, forage use levels, and condition of improvements will be evaluated. **The grazing permit holder is encouraged to participate in these inspections.**

Range readiness inspections will be conducted prior moving cattle into the Cebollita pasture. In general, cool-season grasses should be headed out, forbs in full bloom, brush and aspen leaved out. The availability and extent of residual forage will also be a factor. If these general conditions are not met, and residual forage is not available, it may be necessary to defer moving cattle to upland pastures. This may result in removal of cattle from National Forest System lands if alternate solutions cannot be identified.

III. 2002 MONITORING RESULTS

End of year monitoring results indicated that in general, utilization and stubble height requirements were met for grazing year 2002. The exception was Upper Virgin pasture, utilization and stubble height requirements were exceeded during the 2002 grazing year. As discussed, this pasture will be rested this grazing season, or at a minimum be deferred until later into the grazing season if it is deemed necessary to utilize this pasture.

IV. DEVELOPMENT WORK

In order to further develop the allotment, the Forest Service and the permittee have cooperatively agreed to complete the following projects. In general, Range Betterment Funds (derived from the grazing fees) can be used for approximately one-half of the cost of any project. Please be aware that it usually will be necessary to plan projects with at least one year lead time to allow required documentation and to obtain the necessary funding and clearances. Project work agreed to under Cooperative Improvement Modifications are to be completed within established time frames and to the standards attached to and made a part of the agreement unless otherwise modified by the Forest Officer.

1. Projects for this year:

Stable Mesa/Cebollita Pipeline Extension Projects – pending preparation of necessary documentation.

Wildcat Fence line - pending preparation of necessary documentation.

DO NOT begin the above projects until notified by this office that all necessary documentation has been completed.

NEPA analysis and the Allotment Management Plan will be completed on this allotment in fiscal year 2003.

V. SPECIAL MITIGATION MEASURES FOR CONSTRUCTION ACTIVITIES

Seasonal restrictions (March 1-August 15) on construction activities apply in known breeding areas for threatened and endangered species. Any new construction or reconstruction activities will need to be coordinated with this office. **This does not apply to routine maintenance of existing range improvements.**

VI. MAINTENANCE OF IMPROVEMENTS

Maintenance of improvements (i.e. fences, springs, tanks, wells) should be complete and in satisfactory condition prior to entry date to the specific pasture. **If your maintenance responsibilities do not meet satisfactory condition you will not be permitted to turn out or your entry date may be delayed.**

VI. ADMINISTRATIVE APPEAL

This decision is subject to administrative review, pursuant to 36 CFR 251; and any appeal of this decision must be fully consistent with 36 CFR 251.90 (see enclosed copy of 36 CFR 251 regulations). In accordance with 36 CFR 251.84, if you file an appeal, I am willing to meet with you to discuss any concerns you may have with my decision. If you file an appeal, you may request an oral presentation in the appeal or at any time prior to closing of the appeal record (36 CFR 251.97). Additionally, if you file an appeal, you may request a stay of my decision in the appeal or at any time prior to closing of the appeal record (36 CFR 251.91).

A notice of appeal must be filed with Leonard Atencio, Forest Supervisor, Santa Fe National Forest, at 1474 Rodeo Road, Santa Fe, NM 87505, within 45 days of the date of this decision. A copy of the notice of appeal must be filed simultaneously with John F. Peterson, District Ranger, Jemez Ranger District, P. O. Box 150, Jemez Springs, NM 87025.

I will appreciate if you contact me and together we try to resolve disagreements before you file any Notice of Appeal. I value your experience and knowledge of the allotment. If we cannot reach an agreement, you may exercise your appeal rights. This will insure that we both understand the reasons for each others position regarding any issues. I look forward to working with you this season. I am confident that together we will work effectively to manage the range resources in a manner that reflects good stewardship for the land and cattle alike.

/s/ RON F. HERRERA
for JOHN F. PETERSON
DISTRICT RANGER

03/26/2003
DATE

San Diego
2003/2004

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